

Press Release



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Connecticut Department of Public Health
Contacts: William Gerrish
(860) 509-7270

DPH/NELCC KICK-OFF 2006 Keep It Clean Campaign

(Hartford) -- The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Lead Poisoning and Control Program, the 2006 New England Lead Coordinating Committee (NELCC) and local health departments/districts across Connecticut announce their annual *Keep It Clean* (KIC) Campaign, with its message to contractors and do-it-yourselfers to work in a lead safe manner when painting or renovating older homes.

"It's spring, and work is again starting up in earnest for those who wish to revitalize older homes," said DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M. D., M. P. H. "Homes built before 1960 are often laden with lead paint, causing a health hazard to anyone breathing it in day after day. Lead is particularly dangerous to children from birth to age five. Ingesting lead in the form of paint chips or dust can induce lead poisoning, which is directly responsible for diminished mental capacity and lowered IQ rates in children. *Keep It Clean* gets information about lead safe work habits into the hands of contractors and home improvement enthusiasts before work begins."

Local health departments/districts play a vital role in this campaign by placing written materials about lead safe work environments in local paint and hardware stores. Trained store employees then distribute the information and assist customers with any questions and concerns that they may have related to lead safe work practices or lead-based paint in general.

"In 2005, 87 local health departments encompassing 142 towns participated in the KIC campaign, with 173 partnerships formed with hardware and paint stores," commented Mark Aschenbach, DPH KIC Coordinator, noting an 8% increase in participation over 2004. "Additionally, many of the local health departments distributed KIC and Healthy Homes brochures from their town building department and public library."

Aschenbach is hopeful that the KIC Campaign will spread to more Connecticut towns and cities in 2006, particularly with the advent of free on-line training for store employees. This training is available at the NELCC website: www.nelcc.uconn.edu/kicc.html.

"The more ways we can get this information out to the public, the fewer cases of lead poisoning will result from improper renovation and remodeling," Aschenbach said.

The *Keep It Clean* Campaign continues through July 31st. For more information, contact the CT DPH Environmental Lead Unit at (860) 509-7299 or your local health department.

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